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The Shape of Things

AFTER A MONTH OF WAR THE RED ARMY'S drive against Finland appears to have been stalled in a snowdrift. We must, no doubt, discount some of the Finnish claims and, still more, the unofficial reports of Soviet disasters which reach us via Stockholm and Copenhagen. But making all allowances for exaggeration, it seems clear that the Russians have made no real impression on the Mannerheim Line, while their thrusts from the north and east toward the head of the Gulf of Bothnia have been checked. In both sectors they committed the error of outrunning their communications, thus rendering themselves vulnerable to flank attacks by the Finns. Meanwhile heavy snows blocked the meager transport routes available, and the Finns' policy of destroying all shelter as their army retreated left the Russian troops exposed to the subzero weather with supplies running low. The advance across the "waist" of Finland, which for a time looked as if it might achieve its objective, appears to have been turned into a helter-skelter retreat back to the Russian border. Farther south the Finns claim to have pushed on to Russian soil and may attempt to strike at the Murmansk railroad, which is the life-line of the Soviet forces. However, a Finnish drive in this direction would be subject to the same perils of weakened communications which the Russians have suffered, and the Finnish command, understanding the art of cooperating with "General Winter," will no doubt proceed warily. Checked on the ground, the Russians are increasingly active in the air and have raided many Finnish cities in the past few days. Perhaps their objectives are solely military, but, as always, the bombs once dropped fail to show a nice discrimination, and the civilian casualty list is mounting.

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THE POPE, IN HIS CHRISTMAS MESSAGE, AND the President, in his letter announcing the appointment of Myron C. Taylor as ambassador without portfolio to the Vatican, both paid a seasonal homage to peace in the abstract. Unfortunately, the facts of the European situation hardly warrant optimism about the possibility of giving their sentiments a concrete form. The conditions laid down by the Pope as essential for "a just and honorable peace" were a guaranty of independence to all nations, general disarmament, the creation or reshaping of international bodies to assure faithful observance of international undertakings, the fulfilment of "the true needs" of nations and ethnic minorities, the abandonment of hatreds for "moral justice." It is easy enough to indorse these five points, but if words mean anything, their application would only be possible were Hitler to surrender his conquests and give guaranties against further aggression. That is the snag on which all the peace efforts since September have stuck, and there is no present sign of its removal. The only basis on which the Allies and Germany could possibly make peace now is a common opposition to Russia, and there are indications in the Pope's message that if this kind of united front could be arranged he might forgo his conditions for ideal settlement. Mussolini appears to be aiming in the same direction, and the Vatican must always take account of Italian policy. But we are dubious about American participation in any venture of this kind. A peace which would be, in effect, a Hitlerian triumph would lead directly toward a division of Europe between red and brown totalitarianism.

*

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT'S PROMISE TO SEND army soup kitchens into Ohio if necessary to prevent starvation brought a characteristically ill-tempered reply from Governor Bricker, who charged the President with toadying to the C. I. O. and the Workers' Alliance. Bricker also charged the Administration with having discriminated against Ohio as a Republican state in making WPA appropriations. To this Colonel Harrington has responded by showing that failure of the local authorities to contribute their share of the funds as provided by law is responsible for the fact that only 140,000 out of the 156,000 authorized WPA jobs have been filled. Although the situation in Cleveland has been cleared up by a $1,200,000 bond issue, the plight of those dependent on relief in other parts of the state is more critical than ever. Statistics presented to Mr. Roosevelt showed that inmates of Ohio's jails and penitentiaries receive from three to ten times as much food as is provided for the unemployed. Back in 1929 it was perhaps understandable that the unemployed should be shunted to the bread line and soup kitchen for the necessities of life. But it is

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a sad commentary on American politics that after ten years of experience with mass unemployment a great state is unable to provide food for its destitute.

*

SECRETARY ICKES HAS PLEASANTLY ADDED another odd fragment to the nation's favorite political jigsaw puzzle—the problem of whether Mr. Roosevelt will or will not seek a third term. It may well be that the proposal of the Secretary of the Interior for a conference of liberals in 1940 has nothing to do with the President's candidacy or non-candidacy. But it inevitably gives rise to two theories. One is that Ickes is seeking to corral liberal support from both parties for Mr. Roosevelt. The other, canceling the first, is that Ickes knows Roosevelt will not run again and is fearful that both parties may nominate conservatives. The Secretary of the Interior, a Mugwump from way back, was candid enough to say that thanks to primary laws enacted since 1912, when the Bull Moose threw an election to the Democrats, "you can't get anywhere with a third-party movement in this country." He spoke of "a sacrifice hit" by the liberals. It is hard to believe that Mr. Roosevelt sees himself in the 1912 role of his cousin. The Ickes proposal seems to indicate that Roosevelt will not run again, or at least at the moment thinks he will not run again. More dangerous in our opinion than the nomination of conservatives by both parties would be the nomination of a phony liberal by the Democrats. A gentleman from Indiana comes to mind.

*

COMMODITY PRICES ARE ONCE AGAIN ON the march. Since the beginning of December quotations for a number of domestic farm products and imported raw materials have risen sharply. The war is not entirely to blame for this movement. The striking advance in wheat, the spot price of which reached 109 cents on December 21 as compared with 68½ cents on August 31, seems mainly due to the unprecedented drought in the winter-wheat belt. Prospective output from this area is estimated at 30 per cent below the average for the last ten years, and it is considered likely that next year's wheat harvest for the whole country will be insufficient for domestic consumption, making possible a reduction in the carry-over. The outlook for wheat farmers outside the drought-stricken district is thus more promising, but the situation of those in the Dust Bowl would be desperate were it not for federal parity, soil-conservation, and crop-insurance payments. Another mitigating factor is that some farmers hold part of last year's crop in the government-loan scheme and owing to the rise in prices will be able to redeem it profitably. The advance in cotton has also opened the door to a reduction in government-loan holdings. In this instance there seems to have been a genuine improvement in both domestic and foreign demand, with the latter stimulated by successive reductions in the export subsidy, which is likely to be withdrawn altogether shortly. So far finished goods have not reflected the rise in raw materials, but as the TNEC pointed out recently, a broadening of the current movement will make it difficult to prevent the kind of general mark-up which the Administration has sought to discourage in the interests of stable recovery.

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THE NEW GERMAN-RUMANIAN ECONOMIC pact represents one of the Reich's few diplomatic victories since the beginning of the war. Yielding to incessant Nazi pressure, Rumania has agreed to supply Germany with 130,000 tons of oil monthly, an increase of 32,000 tons over the amount actually shipped in October. It has also agreed to accept an exchange rate of 49 lei to the mark in place of the 40½-lei rate which formerly prevailed. This will enable the Reich to purchase goods 22 per cent more cheaply than previously, but will impose a corresponding price disadvantage on German exports to Rumania. The new exchange rate does not constitute an unqualified Nazi triumph since Germany originally asked for a rate of 72 lei to the mark and accepted the new rate only after weeks of bickering. The significance of the 130,000-ton oil quota is dependent on Germany's ability to improve transport facilities. With the Danube closed, or nearly closed, during the winter months, Germany will be doing well if it actually obtains half its monthly allotment. Germany's special relations with Russia and Hungary seem to preclude, for the moment, political gains at Bucharest which would offset the advantage gained by the Allies in the establishment of the Tatarescu government. Rumania is interested primarily in protection against Russian, Hungarian, and Bulgarian territorial claims. Germany is hardly in a position to offer any such guaranties.

*

CHINA'S GROWING MILITARY STRENGTH HAS been demonstrated by the unexpected success of its mid-winter offensives on four widely separated fronts. In the far south, Kwangsi troops under Pai Chung-hsi are reported to have cut off the town of Nanning, recently captured by the Japanese, and to have occupied several strategic points on its outskirts. In Central China, Chiang Kai-shek's regulars have pushed close to Nanchang, and guerrillas are reported to have entered the suburbs. Farther north, the Chinese have fought their way into the city of Kaifeng, provincial capital of Honan, and captured Lowang, a railway station between Kaifeng and Lanfeng. Increased guerrilla activity has also developed near Hangchow, 100 miles south of Shanghai. Although the Chinese have yet to recapture and hold an important city, their offensive strength has never appeared in such

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a favorable light as within the last few weeks, while Japan has never exhibited less capacity for a sustained offensive. On the international front the Japanese military have once more effectively obstructed the efforts of the Tokyo government to conciliate Great Britain and the United States by delaying indefinitely the government's announced plans for opening the Yangtze and Pearl rivers to foreign shipping. The demonstrated incapacity of the Japanese government to live up to its promises in this instance, as in so many others in the past, should do much to allay the appeasement sentiment in Washington.

*

AFTER THE BRITISH BLUE BOOK CAME THE German White Book, and now we have the French Yellow Book. It can be said with historical accuracy that not one of the Blue, White, Yellow, Red, Orange, and other books published by the various governments during the last war survived the critical examination of scholars. All turned out to have been falsified in one way or another, and the present crop must also be read with care. The most interesting item in the cabled summaries of the Yellow Book is the story of how Hacha was bullied and virtually doped into signing away Czechoslovakia's freedom. Another illuminating revelation is the statement that as early as December, 1938, the Allied governments were warned that a Nazi-Soviet rapprochement was a real possibility. Was it negligence, distaste for a Soviet alliance, or Moscow's terms that were responsible for the failure to heed this warning and arrive at an accord with the U. S. S. R.? Probably all three. The warning came again on May 6 when the French representative asked a person close to Hitler how Germany could possibly make an agreement with the fatherland of communism. "You yourself ought to know," was the cold but realistic answer, "that the most Catholic King did not hesitate in bygone times to make an alliance with the Turks."

*

TIMING, ANY GOOD BOLSHEVIK WILL TELL you, is the essence of strategy. It is in the light of this dictum that Stalin's sixtieth birthday must be judged. The fact is that the Soviet press was in a bad way, what with the Red Army staging a *Blitzkrieg ohne Blitz,* world opinion getting extremely nasty over the "liberation" of the Finns, and Russians in street cars beginning to murmur doubts about the popularity of "the Popular Government of the Finnish Democratic Republic." *Pravda,* to cover up the Retreat to Moscow, has been reduced to some Bunyanesque tales of Soviet gunnery, which according to G. E. R. Gedye is a powerful solution of marksmanship and Fourteenth Street soapbox. When a Russian artillery commander gives orders to fire, there's nothing prosaic about it. "To battle!" he cries. "At the provocateurs of war! In the name of the Fatherland! Fire!" Or "Attack! Crush the artillery opponent! Destroy the long-prepared fortifications!" At least that's what Y. Ogniev, writing on "The Power of Voroshilov's Salvos," reports via Mr. Gedye. Such formulas remind us of the Milt Gross version of a Horatio Alger story, in which the bootblack hero is seen furiously working away at an ironing board conveniently located at the edge of a pier, while the flaxen-haired daughter of the banker shrieks for help as she goes down for the third time. "First," cries out the stalwart hero as he irons away furiously, "first must be nittly prassed de wall-worn coat!"

Finland and Panama

IN THIS business of safeguarding our neutrality, our endeavors to provide general rules are continually meeting shipwreck on the sharp rocks of particular events. The new Neutrality Act, passed after long and anguished debate, was designed to resolve our conflicting emotions in regard to the war between Nazi Germany and the Allies; that is to say, it was an effort to help the latter as much as possible while simultaneously minimizing the danger of getting into the war ourselves. But hardly was the act in operation when the attack of Russia on Finland produced a new set of circumstances which had not been envisaged at the time the Neutrality Act was before Congress.

If, on the outbreak of the Russo-Finnish war, both belligerents had been made subject to its provisions, the effect would have been far more harmful to Finland than to Russia. This would have seemed outrageous to most Americans, whose sympathies were heavily engaged for the victim of Soviet aggression. Hence there was hardly a murmur of protest when the Administration, taking advantage of the technical fact that no war had been declared, just as it has done in the case of the Japanese invasion of China, issued no proclamation under the Neutrality Act but bent all its energies toward rendering physical assistance to Finland. An Import-Export Bank credit has been arranged; a direct loan making possible the purchase of munitions is being discussed; the navy has waived its priority on delivery of new bombers. At the same time steps have been taken to place a "moral" embargo on shipments to Russia of armaments, molybdenum, and aviation gasoline.

We are far from criticizing these steps, but it is well to realize that they lead in a direction quite contrary to the Neutrality Act. At present the Allies are not at war with Russia, but they are sending Finland what aid they can, and if the war spreads to Scandinavia they may well decide on open intervention, merging the two wars now in progress in Europe into one. We should then have to drop financial aid to the Finns, insisting on cash and carry, or find ourselves in a very illogical tangle.

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The westward swing of naval warfare has torn down another of the flimsy fences with which we sought to quarantine ourselves from Europe's quarrels. The Declaration of Panama, adopted by all the American republics, was intended to establish a neutral safety zone, 300 miles wide, round the entire hemisphere. Belligerent nations were politely requested not to undertake any hostile action against each other in the area so defined. Britain and France replied that they would observe the declaration provided that Germany observed it or that the United States guaranteed to enforce respect for it. As Germany made no similar statement and we were in no position to give such a guaranty, the declaration became, in effect, a purely pious resolution.

Just how pious has been lately illustrated by the fight between the Graf Spee and the British cruisers, and the chasing into a Florida port of the German freighter Araucas, suspected of carrying supplies for raiders. Now the knotty question of whether we can prevent more such incidents by putting teeth into the Declaration of Panama is being discussed.

A first step has been taken by the dispatch of a protest to the German and Allied governments signed by the President of Panama on behalf of the twenty-one republics. The statement served notice that the American nations would consult further in order to strengthen the protection of the "security zone" and indicated that a plan to bar American ports to belligerent vessels which had committed warlike acts within the 300-mile limit was under consideration. But already two South American states have made known their opposition to sanctions of such a nature. And even our own naval authorities may demur at rewriting international law in this way, for it would set a precedent which might prove awkward were this country ever to fight a war at sea.

Assuming that these difficulties are overcome, there is still no assurance that the belligerents will respect the Declaration of Panama. Britain has its own bases within the prohibited zone, and Germany will no doubt claim that their existence gives its enemies an unfair advantage; thus we shall again be accused of using neutrality as a mask for unneutrality. The truth is that the only way to keep war beyond the 300-mile limit is by the use of naval power. It is doubtful whether the combined American fleets are adequate for such an enormous task; but if they did attempt it, what would happen when an American patrol discovered a British warship fighting a German warship in the prohibited area? Would it sail between them and fire impartial broadsides at both?

Under these circumstances we expect the Declaration of Panama to grow teeth slowly, if at all. Meanwhile most of us will pray hopefully for the destruction of the remaining commerce raiders, preferably at a safe distance. This would automatically solve the problem, enabling us to have our neutrality cake and eat it too.

Broun's Requiem

IT IS true that we hated to see a former freethinker buried from a cathedral. Of all the places where Heywood Broun moved, in the city that he loved, we can think of none in which he would have felt more out of place than in St. Patrick's on Fifth Avenue. If we feel impelled to say a few words about his funeral service, it is not to reflect upon the religion he adopted. We do not grudge him the spiritual solace he found in the church; but we feel as if it were the duty of some old friend to rise and defend him against the eulogy pronounced at his bier by his spiritual instructor, Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen. Monsignor Sheen is regarded in the church as a scholar and a philosopher. He and Heywood had fought on opposite sides of the verbal barricades on the Spanish issue, but he seems to have come to respect and admire his adversary. The occasion could have been made memorable. That Heywood Broun, the man about town, the radical, should have come finally to the cathedral, recalled a time when the church was truly *catholic*. But Monsignor Sheen chose to deliver a kind of parish priest's homily, and used Broun's conversion as a peg on which to hang a proselytizing oration.

Monsignor Sheen was kind. The kindness was condescending. The very parable he chose for his sermon, that of the worker in the vineyard who received his penny though he did not come until the eleventh hour, seemed to patronize. Only those whose view of religion is scrawny in spirit could fail to see that Broun had served God long before and without benefit of baptism. The love of humanity and devotion to justice which were expressed in his fight for Sacco and Vanzetti were of the kind that has inspired many of the founders and too few of the followers of our great religions. But one felt that in Monsignor Sheen's spiritual bookkeeping Broun's life contained no tangible assets until he decided to become a Catholic. The quality of the man did not entirely escape the priest. He was good enough to say that he had never met anyone who gave him "such an understanding of how our blessed Lord must have loved mankind." And he added that he meant this not merely of Broun after he had become "supernaturalized" but of Broun as he first came to him, "in the raw state." Broun discussed intimate things with Monsignor Sheen—his fear of death, his innermost feelings about the church, and what appears to have been a rather abject promise never to write again in favor of birth control. It seemed ill bred for the priest to air them from the pulpit, proudly detailing the story of a gratifying conversion. The best we can say of Monsignor Sheen is that he meant well. But in the midst of the beauties of the high requiem mass, the accretions of centuries of tradition, his words and their rather blundering revelations of intimacies, were painful to hear.

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1940 Comes In

BY FREDA KIRCHWEY

I wake from dreams and turning
My vision on the height
I scan the beacons burning
About the fields of night. . . .

The signal fires of warning
They blaze, but none regard,
And on from night to morning
The world runs ruinward.

A. E. HOUSMAN

LET the old year slide into history. Do not waste tears on it, not even tears of repentance. It is too late for soft consolations. Look back over its days only to find their meaning for the days that are coming.

Through understanding we may find strength to meet the new year with hardy pessimism and forswear the belief that things will turn out better than the evidence of events and our own good sense tell us is likely. Tragedy has overwhelmed the world, and it is in great measure due to a general refusal to brave the facts. The wars that hold millions of men in trenches and hasten the bankruptcy of nations are a tribute to self-deception. No dictator could have brought this horror to pass if men, in high and low places, in all countries, had not permitted fatal steps to be taken toward a showdown they believed could somehow be dodged. Easy optimism, as well as fear and the drive for power, is responsible for the anarchy that has at last crystallized in war.

I cannot get out of my mind a paragraph in a book by one of the most experienced of European observers. M. W. Fodor wrote these words in 1937 at the end of his shrewd study of the intricate conflicts * that led up to the present disaster. Informed persons outside Central Europe, he said, "watch uneasily the news coming from these parts, believing that some day . . . they will read of some really big disaster in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, or the Balkans. But . . . the statesmen of Central Europe keep their blood cool. Dr. von Schuschnigg, despite all his difficulties, refuses to be perturbed. Dr. Benes, the great President of a small republic, has been an optimist for the last four years. The Polish Foreign Minister, Colonel Joseph Beck, declared the other day that people talk about a crisis in Central Europe; but if a crisis takes the form of permanence, then it is no longer a crisis; it is a permanent condition of life. . . ."

Where are these men now? Where are their countries two years after those words were written? Where did they find the fatal optimism that led so surely to political extinction? The earlier pages of Fodor's book give no satisfactory clue. But I believe it to be a fact that men in positions of power are easy marks for their own too clever tricks of prestidigitation. They come to believe that peace and security—or, at the very least, survival—can be conjured out of chaos by an advantageous deal, a new pact. They play, with faith in their luck, like other gamblers. And they refuse to see the signal fires of warning.

For 1940 Americans should make one simple resolution. It should not be pledged on New Year's Eve in a pleasant haze of fellowship and festivity. We should wait until the cold morning and then promise that in the days to come we will not fool ourselves with old hopes of immunity from the world's evils. America is in the world. No amount of talk, no laws, can remove us from it. Our role is a dominating one, whether we like it or not. It is far safer to accept this truth and make it the basis of our national policy than to go on trying desperately to dodge responsibility, only in the end to stumble into deeper trouble because we refuse to believe that the trouble properly concerns us.

The courage to be realistic is the best that Americans can ask of the New Year.

* "Plot and Counterplot in Central Europe." Houghton Mifflin.

CONTENTS

THE SHAPE OF THINGS 721

EDITORIALS:
- FINLAND AND PANAMA 723
- BROUN'S REQUIEM 724
- 1940 COMES IN 725

ASSAULT ON THE NLRB
by Kenneth G. Crawford 726

SOVIET RUSSIA TODAY 1. HAS STALIN BLUNDERED?
By Louis Fischer 728

POLITICS ON THE CAMPUS by James Wechsler 732

IN THE WIND 733

IT SEEMED TO HEYWOOD BROUN 734

ISSUES AND MEN by Oswald Garrison Villard 735

BOOKS AND THE ARTS:
- THE DISCIPLE by John Berryman 736
- ERSATZ CAPITALISM by Keith Hutchison 736
- MR. ELIOT AND OLD POSSUM by Delmore Schwartz 737
- JOURNAL OF JULIAN GREEN by Justin O'Brien 738
- MANN'S "ROYAL HIGHNESS" by Louis B. Salomon 738
- MUSIC by B. H. Haggin 739
- FILMS by Franz Hoellering 740

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Assault on the NLRB

BY KENNETH G. CRAWFORD

Washington, December 22

NO CONGRESSIONAL investigation for a long time to come is likely to suffer by its inevitable comparison with the Dies affair. So it is that the House committee investigating the National Labor Relations Board seems to have done such a remarkable job in its first week of hearings. It has shown some respect for the more rudimentary rules of fair play. It has recognized that the accused, even if they happen to be connected with the agency under investigation, should have a chance to present rebuttal testimony. It has refrained from announcing its findings in advance of the investigation. Until recently, these concessions to decency would have been conspicuous only by their absence. Now they are present virtues.

Chairman Howard W. Smith, who has not been noted for his restraint when the issue is employers' profits against labor's rights, has presided with fairness and tact. On several occasions he has sided with the two liberal members of the committee against the two conservatives on questions of procedure. Although he opposed the Wagner Act when it was before Congress and has been one of the bitterest critics of the NLRB ever since, he delivered a radio speech shortly after the hearings started conceding that a law protecting labor in the exercise of its rights to organize and bargain collectively should be kept on the statute books. The heavy-handedness of Edmund M. Toland, counsel to the committee, has served to set off Smith's judicial bearing.

But all this show of impartiality should not be mistaken for open-mindedness. Smith holds the balance of power on this five-man committee, and he is out to smear the Labor Board publicly as the first step toward perversion of the Wagner Act. He wants to rewrite organized labor's Magna Charta into organized labor's death warrant. The law should be preserved, to be sure, but with an amendment inserted to prevent coercion of workers "from any source." This dog-eared joker has been up the sleeve of the National Association of Manufacturers all along. There is no question in anyone's mind that the N. A. M. provision would be interpreted as a prohibition against almost any kind of membership solicitation by union organizers.

Smith can well afford to be kind and polite. The first week of the investigation, for all Toland's blustering, failed to turn up any evidence giving substantial support to charges of maladministration and partiality on the part of the Labor Board. What it did show was that members of the board do not always agree on questions of policy, and that, like every government and private agency with field representatives, it has had some perplexing personnel problems. Nothing that Toland or his witnesses said cast the faintest shadow on the board's remarkable record of achievement as attested by its almost perfect score before the Supreme Court, the volume of work it has successfully dispatched, and the growth of unionism under its protection, despite the A. F. of L.–C. I. O. schism. Yet the daily press managed to convert the account of the hearings into prominently displayed running stories suggesting corruption, confusion, and Communist decay.

The first, by all odds the most important, and probably the most misrepresented witness was Dr. William Leiserson, newest member of the board. Toland dumped into the record a stack of inter-office memoranda from Leiserson to Chairman J. Warren Madden and Edwin S. Smith, the older members, charging undescribed "irregularities" in the office of Secretary Nathan Witt, demanding that Witt be fired, disagreeing with the decisions of the majority members in a few cases, and suggesting changes in the election procedure. Because the wording of the memoranda was often caustic, it made good copy. Most newspapers did not play up—indeed, did not even mention—Leiserson's statements that the board and its personnel had, in his opinion, done a splendid job under tremendous difficulties and that he was opposed to any "vital" changes in the Wagner Act.

To keep the press juicy during the dry stretches of Leiserson's discussion of technical problems confronting the board, Toland dropped sensational trivia into the record at carefully spaced intervals. The cutest of these was the memorandum to the Labor Board from a West Coast representative reporting a conversation with John Boettiger, publisher of Hearst's Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* and son-in-law of President Roosevelt. Boettiger had been ordered, as a result of a Newspaper Guild complaint, to reinstate two employees found to have been victims of discriminatory discharge. Boettiger wanted the board informed that he resented the whole business but wasn't going to tell the President on its members because he never exploited his family connections. Anything less important to the waiting world than John Boettiger's opinion of the Labor Board is hard to imagine, but Labor-Board-Declared-Unfair-by-President's-Kin headlines were served up on almost all front pages that day. Another of Toland's publicity masterpieces was a memorandum by

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Witt reporting a conversation with David Dubinsky in which the chief of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, complaining of a board decision, remarked flippantly, "That isn't what we pay our money for," or something to that effect.

Much of the day-to-day copy was fabricated from that kind of stuff. Charges that a Los Angeles regional director got drunk in Arizona and that another West Coast employee was favoring the C. I. O. received the attention they deserved, but the information that both were fired for their sins was developed slowly by Toland and appeared a long way down in the stories. The testimony of James P. Miller, former regional director at Cleveland, about the way he was ordered to get tough with employers, and then fired because he refused, seemed to be hotter stuff than the evidence that he traveled to New York under questionable circumstances and now is a highly paid employer consultant. Much was made of the boast of Philip G. Phillips, regional director in Cincinnati, that his intimate relations with the Guild made it possible for him to kill a newspaper story unfriendly to the board, but little was made of the newspaper's denial that he did any such thing.

More important charges were more adequately answered, thanks to the effective cross-examination of witnesses by Abe Murdock of Utah and Arthur Healey of Massachusetts, the two liberal members of the committee, and to the firm insistence upon admission of answering testimony by Charles Fahy, the board's chief counsel. Toland was overruled by the committee to give Edwin Smith a chance to explain documents intended to create the impression that he tried to persuade officials of the Filene store in Boston to boycott the Berkshire Mills and thus force the mills to settle a labor dispute. Smith explained that while he did ask friends in Filene's to help with a mediation effort and in so doing might have gone outside the letter of the law, he did not try to instigate a boycott. There was an answer, too, for the charge that Phillips influenced the trial examiner in the Cincinnati milling case. Here the board voluntarily withdrew its complaint when it learned of the influence.

What was harped on most, after the committee adjourned for the holidays, was the undisputed revelation that Witt once went to the Middle West to advise C. I. O. leaders about the best way of expediting board action against the Inland Steel Corporation, one of the companies involved in the Little Steel strike. William Green took this evidence as the text for another sermon on the board's alleged favoritism to the C. I. O. When, he asked, had the board ever shown such "sympathy" for the A. F. of L.? Fahy immediately supplied the answer, reading chapter and verse of instances of such consultation both with the A. F. of L. and with employers. Moreover, Fahy supplied figures showing that the board has ruled for the A. F. of L. fifty-one times and for the C. I. O. only forty-four times in cases of direct conflict between the two organizations.

The Smith committee up to now has been no more successful in proving industry's case against the Wagner Act and its administration than were the three other Congressional committees which have conducted similar inquiries since the law was passed. There has been a good defense for every charge made. The board's difficulty is in getting anyone to listen to the answers. Industry and the A. F. of L. have been chanting "The Labor Board is unfair to us" for so long that their plaint is generally accepted as fact. Consequently, most of the Smith committee's job has already been done, and the board, since it can expect few publicity breaks from the investigation, will not be able to undo it. Unquestionably there is a substantial majority in both House and Senate for drastic modification of the law.

Even so, if President Roosevelt and the New Dealers stand by the law and the board, they may survive the 1940 session. The committee plans about two more weeks of hearings in Washington and then a road tour. By the time it submits its final report and recommendations for amendment, the session will be well along. The White House will be in a position to bring pressure for delay and thus, perhaps, to postpone action until after the election—gaining another year for the board to operate and the labor situation to settle down. Whether the President will use his influence to this end is doubtful, however. New Dealers are inclined at the moment to agree that the board has done a magnificent job but disinclined to break a lance in its defense, feeling that it is too vulnerable politically to be defensible, regardless of the facts. Some of them want to turn off the heat by making concessions to the board's critics. The suggestion most often heard is that Madden be kicked upstairs to the federal bench, Leiserson advanced to the chairmanship, and Smith dropped when his term expires next year.

This plan is usually advanced in the name of pragmatic politics, not of justice or even reason, and in whispers. It is slightly less than gallant. Something like it is publicly urged, however, by one of the Labor Board's former friends, Robert Ramspeck of Georgia, member of the House Labor Committee. In addition Ramspeck has proposed amendments which would permit employers to petition for elections and deprive the board of its present latitude in deciding the proper bargaining unit. Neither of these amendments would be fatal to the law, but it is questionable whether any satisfactory rule of thumb can be devised for determining bargaining units. Some such compromise on amendments as Ramspeck proposes may be necessary to head off the latest program of the N. A. M. This scheme, just announced, goes so far in limiting the right to strike that no law at all would be infinitely preferable. After all, the old-time plug-ugly methods of intimidation are preferable to peonage.

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Soviet Russia Today

I. HAS STALIN BLUNDERED?

BY LOUIS FISCHER

LIFE in Soviet Russia had to become very different before Stalin could clasp the hand of Nazi Germany and engage in expansion. Foreign policy mirrors domestic conditions. The Russo-German pact and the events that flowed from it can only be fully understood against the background of new Soviet internal developments, which will be discussed in the third article of this series. But to enable Germany and Russia to march together, the metamorphosis inside Russia had to synchronize with equally great changes outside—changes which produced the present European war. It was the war against the Nazi aggressor that made Bolshevik aggression possible. This is the clue to the pact and to the entire altered relationship between Germany and Russia.

The international scene is a giant jigsaw puzzle. When one piece falls out of place, all the other pieces move. While England and France allowed Germany to win victories in Spain, Austria, and Czechoslovakia, Hitler played up the Bolshevik menace in order to prevent a bloc of the Western powers and Russia which could check German expansion. When he could squeeze no more concessions from England and France, he turned to Russia. The Soviet government had for years sought to win England and France to an anti-Nazi policy. It feared a combination of England, France, and Germany which might be directed against Russia. But when the mounting antagonism between the two democracies and Germany ruled out such a combination, Russia's fear of Germany vanished.

The Russo-German pact of August 23, 1939, was not signed by Moscow for self-defense. The champions of the new Bolshevik-Nazi relationship contend that but for the pact Germany, having invaded Poland, would have marched into Soviet territory and engaged the Soviet Union in a war. This argument has no validity. If Hitler was certain that England and France would not honor their pledge to Poland and would not go to war, why should he have been prepared to share Poland with Russia? Why make his anti-Bolshevik crusade look so ludicrous? Hitler was not so confident of Chamberlain-Daladier appeasement as he had been in 1938. He needed Moscow to frighten the Allies into withdrawing from their promises to Poland; and if war came, he didn't want Moscow to be an enemy. For these favors he was willing to pay Moscow, and he did pay. You do not pay a fellow because you are not going to hit him. Hitler did not intend to strike at Russia. No self-defense on Russia's part was necessary.

Suppose that on September 15, when Polish resistance collapsed, the Allies had not been at war with Germany. Despite the pact with Moscow, Hitler could have kept right on going into Russian territory. The pact is only a piece of paper, not a protection. Why did he not attack Russia? Because he had to turn around and face the Allies in the west. It was Moscow's conviction that the Allies would fight, and not the fear that they would not, which brought about the pact. If the Russians had been worried about a German attack, they would have sought safety with the Allies. They would never have trusted themselves alone with Germany in Eastern Europe except in the knowledge that Germany would be occupied with a war in Western Europe.

Thus, as long as the Allies followed a policy of appeasement and surrender to the fascist aggressors, the Bolsheviks were pro-Ally. And the moment the Allies took a firm stand against a fascist aggressor, the Bolsheviks made a pact with him. That is what is called dialectics.

There will be an endless and fruitless debate on whether Stalin fooled Hitler or Hitler fooled Stalin. Stalin and Hitler entered into their partnership for the mutual benefits they thought it would bring them. No one expects altruism from statesmen. What looks like idealism in foreign policy is often merely a long view of selfish ends. If Stalin and Hitler were serving their countries' best interests they were entitled to act as they did. But human beings make mistakes. Unless Stalin is invested with the infallibility which some Communists ascribe to him, and unless one says mystically that a socialist state can do no wrong, one must assume that he may have blundered. The Kaiser did not intend to ruin Germany when he went to war in 1914. He did ruin it. Chamberlain thought that the Munich surrender to Germany in September, 1938, would bring "peace for our time." Look at that peace now. Perhaps Stalin made a mistake. Lenin committed errors and admitted them. In 1920 the Poles invaded the Soviet Ukraine and captured Kiev. Soon, however, the Red Army drove them back into Poland. A violent controversy broke out in Moscow. Should the Soviet forces pursue the fleeing Polish army and seize all of Poland? Lenin said yes, and Stalin agreed. Trotsky had no enthusiasm for the ven-

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ture, but its most outspoken opponent was Radek, brilliant Soviet publicist, himself a Pole, who argued that if the Russian troops remained poised on the Soviet frontier the Polish workers and peasants, encouraged by the Red Army's proximity, would rise in a revolt which the demoralized Polish troops could not crush. On the other hand, the penetration of the hated Russians into Poland would kindle Polish nationalism and enable Pilsudski to rally his people and army. Radek's point of view, however, was rejected. Lenin even quarreled with Radek and broke off relations with him. The Red Army did invade Poland, General Tukhachevsky, a Bolshevik military genius of twenty-seven, leading the advance on Warsaw, and Budenny and Stalin commanding a cavalry force in the direction of Lvov. Then exactly what Radek had prophesied happened. The Red Army was thrown back from the gates of Warsaw, and the revolution did not materialize. Once, late at night, Lenin went to the telephone and called Radek, and said, You were right; I was wrong; come to see me. Lenin subsequently told the whole story to Clara Zetkin for publication. Perhaps Stalin erred again where Lenin and he erred before—on the question of Poland.

THE PACT: AN UNMIXED BOON FOR THE NAZIS

The entire subject of Russo-German relations should be examined dispassionately on the basis of what has already occurred. Hitler knew that Germany lost the first World War because it had to fight on two fronts. Every German military expert had prophesied that Germany would again be beaten if compelled to cope with the Anglo-French forces in the west and the Russians in the east. The Kaiser started with enough resources and allies to withstand this formidable Triple Entente for several years. Hitler was less fortunately situated in 1939. And he was intent on avoiding the fate of the Kaiser. By signing with Russia he has eliminated it as a potential pro-Ally belligerent. He is now engaged in a one-front war. In other circumstances Hitler might not have gone to war. The pact with Russia makes all the vast difference to Germany between certain defeat and a chance of success. Nothing that Hitler has yielded to Russia can compare even remotely in importance with this advantage.

Hitler had a second motive in concluding his treaty with the Kremlin. He hoped for Russian supplies to facilitate the prosecution of the war. In this he is likely to meet considerable disappointment. Russian materials cannot offset the strangling effect of the Allied blockade.

We know little about German internal conditions, and some observers are prone to exaggerate their gravity. But there is reliable information regarding the acute shortages in Germany of fats, copper, and petroleum—all indispensable to the conduct of a war. It was the scarcity of fats in 1917-18 which undermined Germany's resistance. Fats are not only necessary nourishment; they are the basic ingredient of soap—already doled out in a niggardly ration in Germany—and an element in munitions. Russia, however, lacks sufficient fats and meat to feed its own population. Russia imports copper and therefore cannot export any. It also imports such vital non-ferrous armament metals as lead, zinc, nickel, and antimony. Russia is the world's second-largest oil-producing nation. But its home consumption has mounted with domestic industrialization and motorization, and its exports to all countries, under commercial contracts which it must honor, constitute only a small fraction of Germany's war-time oil deficit. What Russia has to sell—grain, for instance—Germany still possesses in adequate quantities. With Russia's increased military expenditures in Finland it will have still less to export to Germany.

What are the losses to Germany? The disintegration of the anti-Comintern bloc is not one of them. That Italian-German-Japanese partnership was based on the correct assumption that each act of aggression would smooth the path to the next act of aggression. Mussolini was encouraged to invade Abyssinia by the pusillanimity of England and France in China. The supineness of the British and French governments on the Spanish issue conduced to the brazenness of Hitler toward Czechoslovakia. Successful fascist violence bred contempt. It worked in peace time. But war has changed all that. For Japan and Italy to collaborate with Germany now means to fight, and that is very costly and therefore very unattractive. Japan rejected a military alliance with Germany before the Russo-German pact was negotiated. Italy has waged two wars recently, in Ethiopia and Spain, and cannot at present afford a third. With the war in its current "sea and air" phase, Italy and Spain would be smashed if they moved to help Germany. This, and not the Russo-German pact, is what shattered the anti-Comintern agreement.

Germany gave Russia a part of Poland of no great economic value, and has retired from certain positions in the Baltic states, where it had no territory but where German immigrants had established cultural and business stakes. The Russian shadow has lengthened over the Balkans. Yet when a nation gambles for its life as Germany is doing, these are small considerations compared with the benevolent neutrality of a tremendous country like Russia.

The arrangement between Germany and Russia also has social implications. The bolshevization of Germany looms slightly larger as a prospect. But that could arise solely in case of a German defeat or from a desperate effort to stave off such a defeat—the Allies would then seek to check the upheaval—and it is typical of the Hitler regime that its leaders proceed on the principle "After us the deluge." What have they to lose from bolshevization,

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if they first lose their power and position? For the purposes of the war the pact with Russia is an unmixed boon to the Nazis.

RUSSIA AND THE WESTERN POWERS

But what is the explanation of Russia's role in the rapprochement with Germany? We judge a man by the friends he keeps, by what he does, and by the way he talks. Nations too are judged by these criteria.

Russia wanted the friendship of Great Britain, France, and America. Now its spokesmen and press attack those powers. At the same time it collaborates with Germany and defends Nazi policies and acts. Russia had never occupied the territory of other nations after the fashion of Germany, Italy, and Japan. Now it has. Russia had consistently condemned aggression and defended the rights of small countries. Today the Soviets are talking a very different language. Moscow has abandoned every tradition of Soviet foreign policy and discarded the principles of Lenin, Chicherin, and Litvinov which once guided that policy. Russia has swapped streams. Soviet relations with the outside world divide into three parts: between 1917 and 1920 Russia was invaded by foreign nations; between 1921 and 1938 it was not invaded; in 1939 it invaded other countries.

In 1931 occurred the first violent assault on the post-war Versailles status quo: Japan attacked China. Moscow's sympathies were with China. In the years that followed, Moscow opposed every attempt to modify existing territorial conditions. The symbol of that opposition was the Soviet government's adherence to the League of Nations. Moscow joined with alacrity in anti-Italian sanctions because it did not wish to see aggression elevated into a principle. It saw its own safety in a punitive League which could teach transgressors a respect for international law. Its policy was peace, and "peace," as Litvinov first said, "is indivisible."

The years 1936, 1937, and 1938 were the dark age of appeasement. The democracies helped every aggressor and helped no victim of aggression. Moscow was the only effectively anti-fascist government in the world. In China and Spain the Soviet government was actually protecting the British and French empires. It had no objection to doing so because it regarded these ancient agglomerations as stabilizing influences. They were sated, conservative, and unambitious, and therefore no danger to world peace or to Russia. "Fascism," on the other hand, the Third International preached, "is war." The assumption of Soviet policy vis-a-vis Spain and China was that Moscow would support them until the British and French finally woke up to a realization of where their true interests lay and themselves took over the onerous burden of rescuing these weak states from the assaults of rapacious imperialists. Stalin was concerned lest repeated fascist victories undermine the morale, stamina, and strategic strength of the democracies, who were the natural allies of Russia against an expanding Germany and Japan. Anti-fascism was good power politics in addition to being congenial to the Soviet public.

The Western powers, nevertheless, slept in naive self-assurance. Anglo-French policy in Spain and the unnecessary capitulation on Czechoslovakia at Munich in September, 1938, buried many Soviet hopes. The Soviet leaders wondered if the West would ever rouse itself to resistance. The Kremlin began to ask itself whether the progressive forces in democratic countries were worth-while allies. Loyalist Spain, for instance, had rallied to its standard many friends in England, France, and America. They included, moving from left to right, the Communists, the Socialists and labor elements, most liberals, many conservative Protestants, and a large number of prominent conservative politicians. Yet these alignments failed to budge any one of the three democratic governments a single inch in the direction of a more pro-Loyalist policy. Chamberlain and Daladier were firmly intrenched, and they persisted in yielding to the aggressors. Moscow believed that the British and French governments wished to channel fascist aggression toward Soviet territory. Still Moscow paid court to the Western powers. Soviet aid to the Loyalists continued until January, 1939, when Catalonia was still receiving arms; and Moscow was ready to assist the republic in prolonging resistance in the central Madrid zone even after the Catalan collapse.

Drawings by LOW

Then Hitler revolutionized European diplomatic relationships; German troops entered Prague on March 15, 1939, and annexed the Czechoslovak rump. This was reveille.

That day Chamberlain made a statement in the House of Commons. He admitted two days later in a speech at Birmingham that this statement was "somewhat cool and objective" and had given rise to "a misapprehension." "Some people," he added, "thought that because I spoke quietly, because I gave little expression to feel-

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ing, therefore my colleagues and I did not feel strongly on the subject. I hope to correct that mistake tonight." He did. What had happened was a revolt in the Conservative Party against Chamberlain's "cool and objective" reaction to the demise of Czechoslovakia. The British were alarmed. The people called for action. The French saw danger looming. Hitler turned the Reichswehr toward Poland. If Poland were lost, France would be the next victim. Chamberlain was prodded from behind. This was the development which Moscow had hoped for and worked toward through all the years of collective security and the popular front. The goal of those policies was a coalition of imperialists and anti-fascist, democratic, League of Nations elements which would compel the Western governments to stem aggression. It had arrived. Now the Soviet government had powerful friends in England and France. It was precisely at this moment of victory that Moscow contemplated dropping both policies—the popular front and collective security.

The result of the new spirit in London and Paris was the British guaranty to Poland on March 31, 1939, to fight Germany in case Germany assaulted Polish independence. That day is the historic dividing line in the post-war (pre-war) history of Europe. "It must be admitted," Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Molotov said in Moscow on May 31, "that the mutual-assistance pact between Britain and Poland alters the European situation. . . . There are a number of signs that the democratic countries of Europe are coming to realize that the non-intervention policy has collapsed." Appeasement was dying. And the end of appeasement was the beginning of the Russo-German pact.

By giving pledges of protection to Poland and subsequently to Rumania the British and French were actually undertaking to protect the western frontier of Russia. The guaranties to Poland and Rumania were *ipso facto* guaranties to the Soviet government. Accordingly, when in May the British opened negotiations with the Soviet government in Moscow about a mutual-assistance treaty, the Russians felt that they had already received from England for nothing almost everything that England could give them. The guaranties to Poland and Rumania came too quickly for the successful conduct of the conversations with Moscow. Now if the British desired help from the U. S. S. R. they had to offer something over and beyond the guaranties of the Soviet-Polish and Soviet-Rumanian frontiers. Moscow asked concessions in the Baltic area. The stubborn resistance of Finland to Russia's demands suggests that it would have been extremely difficult for England to persuade the three other Baltic states—Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia—to accept the infringement of their sovereignty which Moscow later wrung from them under the threat of force.

Molotov had the bargaining advantage because England, now more hostile to Germany, needed Russia's friendship. Thus the negotiations were ill-starred from their inception: one party was minus its major trumps, the promises to Poland and Rumania; the second party insisted on something which the first did not have. The British might have guaranteed the Baltic states as they had Poland and Rumania against foreign attack. But Russia wanted more; it wanted to be able to check "indirect aggression" or a change of regime inside its small neighbors which it might deem a threat even if no foreign power moved. Since Moscow was necessarily to be the judge as to whether "indirect aggression" had occurred, the Soviet government would be in a position at any time to march in and assume control of the four Baltic countries. It is obvious therefore that Russia was asking England to obtain for it what Germany subsequently gave it.

The crux of the entire Russo-German pact is that the guaranty to Poland was the reverse of "Munich." If the purpose of Munich was to direct German expansion eastward against the Soviet Union, then the British pledge to Poland was insane, certainly inconsistent. Had the Allies wished Germany to attack Russia they would have said: "This is fine. Hitler is preparing to invade Poland. Let him. Then he will wage war on Russia and we shall be secure." Instead they said, "If Hitler attacks Poland, we fight" (the present war is adequate proof that they meant it); and in all the talks with Moscow the British and French governments assured the Kremlin that they would not expect Russia to enter the war before they did. The Bolsheviks consequently decided that since the Allies would create a western front against Germany, Russia would lose nothing from the proximity of Germany or from a German advance into Poland. On August 22, the day before the pact was signed, Neville Chamberlain wrote a letter to Hitler, now printed in the British "Blue Book," in which he said: "Whatever may prove to be the nature of the German-Soviet agreement, it cannot alter Great Britain's obligation to Poland . . . which they are determined to fulfil"; and he cautioned Hitler that "it would be a dangerous illusion to think that, if war once starts, it will come to an early end even if a success on any one of several fronts on which it will be engaged should have been secured." This warning was intended to deter Hitler. But the British attitude it enunciated reassured Moscow. The new Allied policy had a double motivation: (1) Poland was the last pro-Ally satellite in Eastern Europe. Its disappearance would weaken the Western powers and finally convince Hitler of his invincibility. (2) The annihilation of Poland would bring Germany into contact with Russia. That might precipitate a war between them, but since Russia was weaker than Germany, it would also present the dreaded prospect of collaboration between them.

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The present war is the logical consequence of the British pledge to Poland. Moscow saw this coming. It gave Russia a freedom of choice. Before that Russia could only have been pro-Ally. Now it had an alternative. Allied hostility to Germany and the scrapping of Munichism allowed Russia to be pro-German. If Russia sided with the Allies it would have to participate in a war in case one came, but without obtaining what it coveted in Poland and the Baltics. If, on the other hand, it sided with Germany, it could remain aloof from the major conflict and yet gather booty outside its territory. These considerations disrupted the Anglo-Soviet negotiations, not petty questions of rank, mandates, and diplomatic niceties. Had Stalin been eager for an agreement with the British, but on better terms, he would have negotiated openly with Germany. That would have constituted pressure on London. But the talks with Germany were secret. Downing Street knew nothing about them. Instead, to extract better conditions from the Germans, the Russians negotiated openly with the British. Great Britain thus helped Russia to obtain more from Germany. The Anglo-Soviet negotiations were doomed from the start to failure. Not only did Strang waste his time. Halifax himself would have wasted his time.

[*Mr. Fischer's second article, dealing with the negotiations that led up to the Russo-German pact and with the trend of Russia's new foreign policy, will appear next week.*]

Politics on the Campus

BY JAMES WECHSLER

TO LIBERALS and radicals the annual convention of the American Student Union, being held this week on the University of Wisconsin campus, has more than routine importance. Since August 23 the Student Union has been a laboratory in which one could observe the effects of the German-Russian pact and the subsequent revolution in Russian foreign policy on a left-wing organization. The current convention may be a preview of things to come in a host of other groups which were the creatures of the late popular front.

The Student Union itself was the earliest native miniature of the popular-front idea. It was formed in 1935 by liberal, Socialist, and Communist students. When the Union later supported collective security, the Socialists folded their theoretical tents and departed; but the bulk of the liberals as well as the Communists remained. The Union's activity was a genuinely joint enterprise, made possible by the coincidence of Communist realism and anti-fascist sentiment on the campus. Its membership was predominantly non-Communist, and there was a relatively slight amount of friction between the Communist and non-Communist adherents. They agreed that the Union's most important mission was to arouse and organize critical student thought; and its preoccupations ranged from the Spanish war to curriculum reform.

The German-Russian pact and later events introduced a sudden, deep cleavage. They also posed the issue of the ultimate fate of all the organizations which had been similarly the product of the popular-front policy. In the Student Union the ensuing ideological storm has tended to revolve around the person of Joseph Lash, an ex-Socialist, who has been executive secretary of the Union since its inception. Sympathetic to the Soviet Union and its effort to organize a world front against fascism, Lash had broken with his Socialist colleagues on the popular-front issue and received a correspondingly warm reception from the Communists. Then came the revolution—in Communist policy. Lash criticized the Nazi-Soviet pact. He condemned the invasion of Finland. Shortly after the outbreak of war he sent an open letter to the White House urging the lifting of the arms embargo. He argued that a Nazi victory would imperil free institutions and that the granting of aid short of war was the most hopeful method of keeping the United States out of the struggle. There was nothing very new in this document; indeed, it was a faithful restatement of the Student Union program. As late as September 8 Communist members of the Union's administrative committee had advanced identical ideas. By October 8 the mass mind-changing was complete; Lash was rebuked by the Communist spokesmen. The breach grew steadily wider, and Russia's attack on Finland brought the conflict to a head.

For until then those who were critical of Russian policy had been reluctant to press the point, fearing its possible exploitation by reactionary agencies. But shortly after the Finnish invasion representatives of the New York chapters of the Union met, debated, and issued a statement rationalizing Russian policy; the Communists had staged a whirlwind propaganda drive within the chapters. Several out-of-town groups echoed the New York stand, though in most cases a substantial minority dissented. Liberals in the Union had heretofore been unorganized, but now Lash, with several other national officers and chapter officials, proceeded to initiate a counter-drive. Opposing any moves toward a head-on collision

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between the United States and Russia, they nevertheless refused to accept a moral double standard for evaluating Russian aggression. They argued, further, that apologetics for the Russian action would doom the very organizations which could later resist an anti-Soviet holy war or its native counterpart—an anti-red crusade. There is ample evidence that fear of such consequences is not groundless. The Harvard *Crimson,* heretofore sympathetic to the Union, has warned that a whitewash of Soviet policy would compel withdrawal of the Harvard chapter; this view has been seconded in other important areas. It is doubtful whether the Union could survive, except in vastly disfigured and diminished form, the indorsement of a blank check for Soviet diplomacy.

If the Union is not Communist property—and it isn't—and if liberal student sentiment is overwhelmingly hostile to the current Communist manifestos, why is there any likelihood that the convention will take such a stand? The answer is vital for the light it sheds on the history of organizations like the Student Union. The Communist students act as a unified bloc in the election of delegates; they hold important posts in the Union's district apparatus because they are willing to do the difficult and unrewarding postgraduate work of organization; and they make limitless sacrifices to attend conventions when lukewarm members are content to celebrate Christmas. There is nothing improper in this set-up, but it explains how a disciplined minority may shape an organization's policy.

Far less creditable—but equally familiar—has been the Communists' recent treatment of Lash. Shortly after his dissent became audible, rumors started to circulate simultaneously in several places: he was launching a "red-hunt"; he was going to "expose the Communists" to the Dies committee; he was willing to wreck the Union in the process. One chapter sent him a telegram demanding that he "stand up before the Dies committee," with the obvious inference that he was lying down. His forthright testimony before the committee is now a matter of record. So, too, is his opposition to any move to "oust the Communists" from the Union. But these acts do not atone for original sin.

The convention now in progress will determine whether the Communists have lost their anxiety for a common front with non-Communist groups unless it can be obtained on their own terms. It may also reveal the ability of the non-Communist groups to press for an independent position without recourse to red-baiting, and to undertake the numberless organizational tasks which the Communists have heretofore monopolized by default. In that sense the convention's choice of officers may prove no less important than the policy it adopts. In larger terms the convention may demonstrate to what degree Russian affairs remain the fatal obsession of the American left.

In the Wind

NAZI PROPAGANDISTS have invented a new device to show the warmth of the Russian alliance. To Americans in Pennsylvania they have sent packages of Nazi literature stamped "Via Siberia." But the postmarks show that the material arrived less than three weeks after mailing. It would take more than a month "via Siberia."

A LIBERAL secretary to a liberal Supreme Court justice is the subject of one of Wall Street's current stories. While a friend was in his office recently, the secretary called a telephone number and said: "Hello, Tom, I'm sure my judge will be all right on that case, but you'd better get Ben to go around and see Black." After he hung up, his visitor asked timidly: "Was that Tom Corcoran?" "Sure," replied the secretary nonchalantly. Now Wall Street lawyers are relaying the tale that the New Dealers have pipe-lines to the court. P. S. The call was a hoax cooked up by the secretary.

THE NATIONALIST Spanish Writers' and Artists' Association recently renewed its "cultural" meetings. At the opening session the chairman was General José Millan-Astray. Early in the Spanish war General Millan-Astray achieved considerable fame in Franco Spain as the author of the slogan: "Down With Intelligence! Long Live Death!"

A GERMAN RADIO broadcast recently asserted that H. M. S. Kestrel had been sunk. The announcer glorified the feat and attributed it to "clever tactics" by a German submarine commander. In fact, H. M. S. Kestrel is the British Admiralty's name for Worthy Down, an airdrome miles from the sea.

NATIONAL ANTHEM: When Baltimore Communists staged a mass-meeting recently, irate legionnaires descended on the hall and nearly precipitated a riot. The Associated Press dispatch on the incident contained one curious note. It reported that when the Communists started to sing "My Country 'Tis of Thee," one of the hecklers screamed, "Why don't you stand up when you sing the national anthem?"

CONFIDENTIAL NEWS: From the Hollywood column "Screen Gossip" by Prunella Hall: "Carole Lombard, star of 'Vigil in the Night,' has always wanted a magnolia tree. This week the cast and crew of the picture made up a purse and bought one for her and had it transplanted at the Gable-Lombard ranch near Encino. Carole will find out about it at Christmas time—so closely is the secret guarded."

BUSINESS MEN are being asked for contributions by the National Association of Manufacturers. The plea explains that a $100 gift will "put on the air fifty radio programs of either the American Family Robinson or Sokolsky series explaining the private enterprise system."

[*The $5 prize for the best item received during December goes to H. R. Southworth of New York City for the story about Gustavo Duran published last week.*]

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It Seemed to Heywood Broun

MANY have come to think of a liberal as a good-humored fellow with some sense of sportsmanship. He strides into a dispute and sagely ventures: "There is much to be said on both sides. The truth lies somewhere between the two." And that's a silly thing to say because it does not indicate just where truth sits in the uncharted field lying between the left and right. . . . There is no reason to respect the man who keeps his mind so open after the storm has broken that he cannot temper the wind to any shorn lamb.

Editors might be bored, but they were never angry, if I wrote about my fish, my child, or even my fingernails. But when something burns inside and that comes out, the situation's very different. Newspapers don't like their men to get mad about things.

I am sick to death of all the bleating which goes up about "destructive criticism." . . . In the theater Duses are discovered daily and hats go sailing into the air when any rather pretty girl walks across the stage without tripping over the furniture. . . . Nobody can paint or sing or write so badly that the commentators will fail to give him some grain of solace. And it is these crumbs of comfort, carelessly thrown, which have gone to make up the great desert areas of the half-baked.

Some believe that if you give an incompetent artist enough rope he will hang himself. Statistics fail to support this pleasant theory.

Things do not end when they are done. The liberal Boston *Herald* said when Sacco and Vanzetti were completely dead that the time for all discussion of that case was now over. "The chapter is closed. The die is cast. The arrow is flown." It is not true. I won't agree. For truth there is no deadline.

There are scores of American communities in which Sacco and Vanzetti might have been killed with just as much good-will.

Culture is a little bit like the manna of heaven and may descend upon the good even in the space of a single day. At any rate, there is no culture worth the name unless it is accompanied by a certain zest. I hate to see anyone seeking knowledge with knitted brows. Too great a gulf has been placed between learning and laughter.

For the time being there is need of a close alliance and understanding between big business and men of a radical turn of mind. . . . It is practical wisdom for the Socialist to say: "Combine and merge, grow big and bigger, and at the proper time we'll take you over."

Organized Christianity makes personal liberty impossible, mars education, and supports the utter brutalities of our prison system. . . . The pursuit of happiness belongs to us, but we must climb around or over the church to get it.

I speak as one who finds that water, in moderation, can be most refreshing. But so-called soft drinks corrode the delicate lining of the stomach. There should be chapters in the school textbooks showing the abdomen before and after it has been exposed to a raspberry flip.

Why does America hate the foreigner so profoundly? I think it is because we have wronged him so much. He has become through tariffs and war debts an economic slave bound to this country. And when a slave begins to speak, his mouth must be shut at once for fear of what he is about to say. He knows too much.

I am not a prude, and yet I must admit that it embarrasses me hideously to sit by while any ancestor of mine from grandmother down undertakes to tell a torrid story. Invariably I have the same sinking feeling which assails me when a clergyman seeks to unbend and become rowdy for the laity.

The Southerner who studiously refrains from ever going into a Negro home except for charitable or immoral purposes has no right to claim intimate knowledge of a race which he has rendered outcast. Surely self-consciousness is not swept away by handing over a Christmas turkey; and, to paraphrase a familiar anecdote, sexual intercourse does not constitute an introduction.

Anger isn't the same thing as hatred. It is a flash of feeling which goes over the dam upon the instant. No man who has expressed his anger with reasonable fluency need go back to it again. Revenge is a form of procrastination. The man who eases his soul by paying off a score at the end of twenty years confesses that he didn't have the nerve or the mental alertness to handle the situation when it lay immediately in front of him.

From my own standpoint I am not prepared to acquit atheists of all fanaticism. Their unwavering opposition to the Bible seems to me a little muddle-headed. I cannot go much of the way with puritanical freethinkers who would suppress the book as immoral. I think that under certain conditions the Bible is not harmful to young people. . . . The modern child is insulated. A youngster brought up on the various things done to Jeff by Mutt is not likely to be harmed by hearing of the mean trick which Jacob played on Esau.

God help the United States, or any other nation, when the cry of hungry children, the grinding of gaunt men, and the suffering of women can be classed as a local issue.

[*The preceding passages are excerpts from columns written by Heywood Broun for* The Nation *between 1927 and 1938.*]

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Issues and Men

BY OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

The Latest Anti-Jewish Horror

The Hague, November 20

THE flood of war news has I fear blanketed the latest developments in Hitler's crusade against the Jews. I refer, of course, to his determination to jam them all into a small piece of Polish territory which is to be called a "Jewish State," but which is to be nothing else than a huge concentration camp and charnel house. During my stay of nearly four weeks in Germany I could obtain very little news about this beyond the fact that heart-breaking deportations were going on in Austria and Moravia. Now some of the facts have leaked out here, but the German people will doubtless be kept in ignorance of them—as usual. Hitler himself seems now obsessed with the idea of moving minorities. He first undertook to move the Tyrolese Germans, with Mussolini's blessing. His "recall" of the Baltic Germans was the next step. Now comes his decision to dump all the Jews possible into a territory at present described as "from Nisko on the River San to a point southwest of Lublin." The deportations began in the Czech Protectorate, from which 150,000 were to be moved by October 17, and are to be continued by the removal of 65,000 from Vienna, 30,000 from Posen, and 200,000 from the rest of the Reich—all that remain of the 600,000 living in Germany when Hitler the Fiendish took charge.

Lest anybody ask at this point why it is not a good thing to set up a Jewish state where the Jews can be safe and by themselves, let me say that before these people are moved they are to be robbed of all their wealth except 300 marks, and they will not be allowed to take any furniture or equipment of any kind with them. Into a space of eighty by one hundred kilometers 1,950,000 people are to be jammed, without working capital, without tools or habitations, unable to do business even with the contiguous territories. How they will live until their first crops or how they will till the land without tools or animals is not explained.

One has only to contrast these barbarities with the way that the German papers say the returning Balts are being received to realize that they are unnecessary and deliberate. The Balts are welcomed by the Red Cross, by special reception committees, by government officials; they are taken with marvelous efficiency to homes all in readiness for them. They are to be paid for the property they left behind and are to be given the necessary tools and implements and working capital to start life anew. But the Jews are treated literally as no German would be allowed under the law to treat a dumb animal. I have seen a letter sent by an Aryan German from a town in Moravia to an American official begging him to get the American government to intervene. He said that he was a loyal German but that he could no longer remain silent. He declared that a train of cattle cars—the Jews are allowed no others—had stood for twelve hours in the station of his town. The weather was cold, and there was of course no heat. There were no toilet facilities. No food or water was provided. He said that the moans and groans of the older people could be heard blocks away. German laws forbid such treatment of cows or swine or dogs.

Meanwhile, the remaining German Jews sit around waiting for their turn in the cattle cars. In Vienna, the Dutch papers report, eighty-two Jews, thirty-six of them women, have committed suicide in the last two weeks. That is what Hitler likes to hear. He can steal everything they leave. He would have Jews murdered out of hand, I have no doubt, if he dared. It would certainly be more merciful if he did. I have no means of knowing how much of this news has reached America or what can be done about it there, but I am sure that a tremendous wave of denunciation from non-Jews, led, let us say, by the Quakers, might help, because the Germans are particularly anxious just now not to draw America into the war. I recall those wonderful mass-meetings at the time of the Kishinev massacres in Russia, one in Carnegie Hall with ex-President Cleveland speaking. If ever a similar outcry were called for, it is now.

One other piece of bad news I must give. It is widely believed in responsible circles in Germany that part of the bargain with Stalin calls for the application of the Nürnberg laws to Russian Jews, and that this will be done within six months from the signing of the pact. It is not thought that such laws will actually be put on the statute books. Stalin will simply give certain orders; that will be enough.

[*Since this article was written, a report has been received from the Netherlands that 40,000 Jews have already been herded into the "Jewish State" under such shocking conditions that typhus is rampant. A later dispatch, from Paris, indicates that the plan for the Lublin "reservation" has been abandoned in favor of a larger reservation of mixed Polish and Jewish population.*—EDITORS THE NATION.]

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BOOKS *and the* ARTS

The Disciple

By JOHN BERRYMAN

Summoned from offices and homes, we came.
By candle-light we heard him sing;
We saw him with a delicate length of string
Hide coins and bring a paper through a flame.
I was amazed by what that man could do.
And later on, in broad daylight,
He made a man sit suddenly upright
Who had been long dead and whose face was blue.

But most he would astonish us with talk.
The intent sad cadence of his voice,
His compassion, and our terror of his choice,
Brought each of us both glad and mad to walk
Beside him in the hills after sundown.
He spoke of birds, of children, long
And grueling tribulation without song
For the indigent and crippled of that town.

Ventriloquist and strolling mage, from us,
Respectable citizens, he took
The hearts and washed them in an upland brook.
Calling them his, all men's, anonymous.
He gained a certain notoriety;
The magical outcome of such love
The State saw it could not at all approve,
And sought to learn where when that man would be.

The people he had entertained stood by,
I was among them, but one whom
He trusted sold him to policemen, doom,
Repenting later most most bitterly.
They ran him down and drove him up the hill.
He who had stolen but hearts stood
With thieves, performing still what tricks he could
For men to come, rapt with compassion still.

Great nonsense has been spoken of that time.
But I can tell you I saw then
A terrible darkness on the face of men,
His last astonishment; and now that I'm
Old I behold it as a young man still.
None of us now knows what it means,
But to this day our loves and disciplines
Candle that man upon the darkened hill.

Ersatz Capitalism

FASCISM AND CAPITALISM. By Daniel Guérin. Pioneer Publishers. $2.

THE VAMPIRE ECONOMY: DOING BUSINESS UNDER FASCISM. By Guenter Reimann. Vanguard Press. $3.

THERE is general agreement among students of fascism that both in Italy and Germany its rise was materially aided and abetted by the leading capitalists of those countries. Unanimity ceases, however, when discussion proceeds to the question of whether this political investment has proved to be sound. Marxists of all schools tend to consider the fascist state as the *ne plus ultra* of capitalism: it is the instrument of the great magnates and by and large serves their interests. Admittedly it involves certain unpleasant sacrifices for the possessing classes, who, as Dwight Macdonald says in his preface to Guérin's book, "must give up much under fascism." But, he asks, "under what alternative system would they yield less?" The answer to this question may be that capitalism, given a choice of sudden death under communism, murder by slow torture under fascism, and gradual liquidation by democratic methods, might decide that the third alternative is the least painful. Of course it might be argued that it has no choice, that historical necessity will force it to struggle by the most desperate means to retain its powers and its profits. I would not care to be dogmatic on this point, but I suspect that American capitalists who appreciate the fate of their German confrères, as depicted by Mr. Reimann, will hesitate to seek the same path to "salvation."

Daniel Guérin, a distinguished French Marxist scholar (non-Stalinist), might, on the other hand, persuade them that the fascist state is genuinely devoted to capitalism, or at least willing to protect it on expensive but not utterly exorbitant terms. His fascinating and well-documented account of the rise of fascism stresses the fact that in both Italy and Germany the drive toward dictatorship was backed at a much earlier stage by the heavy industrialists than by those interested in the consumer industries, whose need to find a market for their goods led them to take a more liberal view of the maintenance of working-class standards. At the crisis, however, terrified of bolshevism and unable to stomach the thought of civil war, they too toed the fascist party line.

Guérin emphasizes the importance of the financial assistance which Mussolini and Hitler received from their moneyed friends, but he recognizes fully that such aid would have been useless without a mass base of support. The most valuable part of his book is that in which he describes how the Fascists in Italy and still more the Nazis in Germany built up a huge popular following. Obeying the injunction of the Gospels, they became all things to all men. While pleasing the owning classes with ferocious attacks on communism, they lulled the peasants and small employers by their denunciations of monopoly and "interest slavery." The

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workers they sought to arouse by vilification of "international plutocracy" and by promises that unions would be supported and the dignity of labor elevated in the new nation.

Once in power the Fascists proceeded to kick the faces of those on whose shoulders they had climbed. True, the workers were given work—more than they wanted—but their standard of living was drastically reduced and their unions were smashed. The peasants were placed in a regulatory strait-jacket and forced to submit to an economic regime which raised their costs and cut the prices they received. Small business men, particularly retailers and independent artisans, received none of the relief promised and were systematically forced into wage labor. At first the big capitalists seemed to be the sole gainers. Their wage costs were reduced, their workers were rendered docile, and government contracts kept their factories busy. In Germany they were reassured by the June 30 purge of the radical Nazis, and despite the growing interference of the state in business, they were, according to Mr. Guérin, still fairly well satisfied in 1938, when this book was written.

Mr. Reimann's detailed picture of how business operates under the Nazis suggests that German capitalism has been undermined to a greater extent than Mr. Guérin admits. Increasingly wound in red tape, subject to endless restrictions with regard to prices, the purchase of raw materials, and the hiring of labor, weighed down by enormous taxes and arbitrary assessments, the German business man can hardly be said to be conducting a private enterprise. True, the right to private property remains for those who have not offended the Nazis by racial origin or political views, but more and more the state dictates how capital shall be invested. A large part of the enormous financing required by Göring's five-year plan has been provided by levies on the reserves of the big corporations.

Thus the capitalists who helped create the totalitarian state find themselves more and more at its mercy. Because National Socialism can only maintain itself by armaments and war, the surplus value created by industry must increasingly be drained off to support the army and the bureaucracy. The workers were first deprived of butter, but once they were down to subsistence level it was necessary to raid the capitalist coffers to keep the juggernaut rolling. Moreover, the logic of dictatorship demands that every rival citadel of power be captured and destroyed. The fortress of big industry held out longest in Germany, but its fall was near when the Nazis blithely reversed their anti-Communist tenets, and now its commander, Fritz Thyssen, has given up the battle. Such capitalism as remains in Germany seems as *Ersatz* as the coffee.

The question of who profits by fascism is important. The assumption that fascism is no more than a capitalist rearguard action is dangerous, for the conclusion that it will break down with capitalism is apt to follow. Actually capitalism seems likely to wither away before the Nazi party-state, which may continue to function on a collectivist basis. Those who believe that the exploitation of the workers automatically ends with the abolition of private control and ownership of the means of production may look forward to this development. But how many people today are as naive as that?

KEITH HUTCHISON

Mr. Eliot and Old Possum

OLD POSSUM'S BOOK OF PRACTICAL CATS. By T. S. Eliot. Harcourt, Brace and Company. $1.25.

MR. ELIOT'S new book begins with two drawings on orange paper. Presumably they were drawn by Mr. Eliot himself. The second drawing represents two gentlemen roller-skating arm in arm, one of them dressed in a top hat and spats, the other in knickers and a beard, the total effect suggesting that J. Alfred Prufrock is waltzing with an old Bolshevik. This beginning is followed by a dedication of the book to four persons whom one would suppose to be children of Mr. Eliot's acquaintance, and then come fourteen poems which were undoubtedly written for children and for no one else, a fact which the publishers might have made more explicit.

The poems are not only about cats, but about English cats. Moreover, they are poems not for any children but for English children, for they refer often to such objects as pubs, area windows, the Admiralty, Indian colonels, and numerous London place names. What American and especially New York children would think of these verses is difficult to say. One suspects that the insufficiency of intricate plots, violence, and slapstick might induce unfavorable comment in beings accustomed to the comic strip. Mr. Eliot successfully avoids the usual vices of children's books, archness and cuteness; for his cats are practical cats, cats engaged in getting something purposeful done or undone; and the genres of Edward Lear are emulated skilfully. One merely doubts the universality of appeal.

The reader of Mr. Eliot's previous efforts in light verse might well have expected this book to continue the intense irony of "Sweeney Agonistes" or of the "Five-Finger Exercises," which sang of "How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot! (Whether his mouth be open or shut)." These verses do not present that engaging aspect of the poet; and there is virtually nothing in Mr. Eliot's previous writing which prepares, predicts, or makes probable

> Macavity's a Mystery; he's called the Hidden Paw—
> For he's the Master Criminal who can defy the Law.
> He's the bafflement of Scotland Yard, the Flying Squad's despair:
> For when they reach the scene of crime—*Macavity's not there!*

But the very best poem of the book has to do with the naming of cats and provides sublime advice on names and identifications in general. Here we are told that a cat needs at least three names, a daily name, a fancy name, and a particular, peculiar, dignified name, which is unique. Yet even these three names fall short of defining the cat as a private individual. For a cat, says Mr. Eliot, has another name which no one but the cat himself knows, "the name no human research can discover." It is of this name that the cat is thinking when he is seen in profound meditation. This ought to be a sufficient reminder to all readers. When Mr. Eliot calls himself Old Possum in this new and unexpected book, he is not only displaying himself in the hitherto unknown part of a gifted friend of children; he is also thinking of the names he has been called and reminding us of that private, pecu-

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liar, dignified, "deep and inscrutable singular name" of himself, which he "himself knows and will never confess." We do not know that name, but we can be sure that Old Possum is not correct.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ

Journal of Julian Green

PERSONAL RECORD, 1928-1939. By Julian Green. Translated by Jocelyn Godefroi. Harper and Brothers. $3.

EACH time a new novel by Julian Green, of Paris and Virginia, appears, his French readers hasten to attribute the disturbing elements in it to his American ancestry, while readers on this side of the Atlantic commonly explain those same characteristics by reference to his French education. The publication of his diary should reveal that, though there is justice in both explanations, neither tells the whole story. Certain affinities between his novels and the work of writers from our own South such as Poe or Faulkner can be discerned, but so can they in the work of French writers—Baudelaire, Nerval, and others—who doubtless never heard of the Mason and Dixon Line. That Green's education, on the other hand, has made him more French than American is immediately apparent in almost every one of his reflections on literature or art. After all, he thinks, writes, and is comfortable only in French.

But the strange world of hallucination into which his fiction introduces us is the product neither wholly of heredity nor wholly of environment. Certainly it is quite peculiar to Green; and his diary, while not completely satisfying in the clues it offers, shows a remarkable conformity between the man and his work. The intensification of unreality in his latest novels at least borders on the pathological. In "Personal Record" he recounts his remarkably frequent and vivid dreams, his haunting fear of death and stairs, his means of escaping brutal reality, and continually indicates the strong personal element in his novels. "I am *all* the characters," he writes of "The Dark Journey," and again, "All that I write is immediately and directly derived from my childhood." It is along these lines that a clearer understanding of Julian Green's work must be sought, rather than in his bilingual background.

More than almost any other writer of our day, Julian Green is a man for whom art is life. When he is not writing, he is reading or visiting exhibitions or attending concerts; his friends are all writers or artists. The social and political problems of the modern world receive but scant attention in his diary. The fact that art in all its forms offers him a constant refuge from life gives a semblance of outer serenity to a mind which one feels to be tormented within. Unfortunately, in the present form of the diary, one only senses this, since Green has suppressed all the intimate passages, leaving the reader to stumble hungrily over suspension points. To judge from his own references to this journal, however ("Its nature is such that it can hardly be published during my lifetime"), the complete work will doubtless be buried in the Bibliothèque Nationale for our grandchildren to read.

In July, 1935, André Gide reproached Green for isolating himself in literature; eighteen months later Gide, back from Moscow, urged him to remain "unpolitical." The name of André Gide reappears every three or four pages in this diary, not the least of whose claims to interest is the lively sketches it provides of that great writer. In his own diary for June, 1928, Gide records that "Green is strangely like what I was at his age." That is enough both to explain his cordial interest in the younger man and to fill us with hope for Julian Green and for the unpublished portions of "Personal Record."

JUSTIN O'BRIEN

Mann's "Royal Highness"

ROYAL HIGHNESS. By Thomas Mann. Translated from the German by A. Cecil Curtis. Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

BETWEEN the serious and weighty naturalism of "Buddenbrooks" and the dialectic orchestration of "The Magic Mountain"—to use the author's own phrases—came this humorous little interlude, written by Thomas Mann in 1905 and now issued in a new American edition. With much suave irony and amiable sympathy it tells the story of Prince Klaus Heinrich, heir-apparent to the throne of a nameless German principality when royalty was only decadent, by no means obsolescent. In the hot-house atmosphere of the grand ducal *Schloss* the prince is reared for a life to be spent in the public eye—very much like the Dionne sisters behind their one-way-vision glass windows, except that members of the royal family cannot forget for a moment the thousands of noses figuratively flattened against the pane, the thousands of loyal but exacting eyes watching every gesture. When Klaus Heinrich attends school together with scions of less exalted stock, his tactful teacher even arranges a signal by which the prince may show whether he really knows the answer to a question or not, since the dignity of the state demands that he must always hold up his hand, while that same dignity would never survive the catastrophe if he should muff a question. In later years, because his elder brother has turned his back on the anachronistic puppet show of royalty in a machine age, Klaus Heinrich takes on his narrow shoulders the entire burden of representing the dynasty at shooting matches, dedications, state balls, officers' messes, and cornerstone layings. Trapped in this endless merry-go-round of ceremony as hopelessly as any fairy-tale prince in an enchanted castle, he is finally liberated by virtue of his love for a fabulously wealthy American financier's daughter, who not only wafts a breath of real life into his museum-like existence but injects a badly needed transfusion of gold into the state coffers.

If this comic-opera plot were the be-all and the end-all of the book, it would not merit a new edition; but, being written by Thomas Mann, it naturally embodies a full and complex symbolism, obligingly explained by the author in a new preface. The problem of the isolated prince is the problem of the artist, only too often apart from life and "different," destined never to be exactly as other men are, yet achieving redemption only through love and sympathy and contact with reality. Then, too, the author wanted to present a picture, however fancifully tinted, of the actual German monarchy as of 1905: the almost unrecognized conflict between intrenched prerogative and the ebullient but not yet articulate assertiveness of the middle class. The Minister of State is

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Prince von Bülow in literary disguise, and Prince Klaus Heinrich is even pictured as having a stunted left arm, though this physical defect seems rather to symbolize the prince's inescapable fleshly kinship with the least fortunate of his subjects than to point a resemblance to Kaiser Wilhelm II.

Though in itself the book makes pleasant reading, it will doubtless be of greatest interest to students of Dr. Mann's development as an artist. For these readers it will be sufficient recommendation to cite the author's assertion that without "Royal Highness" neither "The Magic Mountain" nor "Joseph and His Brothers" could have been written.

LOUIS B. SALOMON

MUSIC

COMMENTING on the Metropolitan Opera squeeze play last August I pointed out that the Metropolitan Opera Association, the present operating company, was created as the means by which the boxholders retained control of production while the public assumed financial responsibility for it; and that the proposed sale of the opera house by the Metropolitan Real Estate Company which the boxholders own to the Metropolitan Opera Association which they control for $1,500,000 which the public was to contribute, was the boxholders' way of insuring that the performances continue to be given solely for their satisfaction but at least cost to themselves—the cost of a fashionable Monday night subscription instead of a share of the taxes and maintenance charges on the building. Sixty-eight and one-half per cent of the stockholders of the Real Estate Company have now voted to sell—for $1,970,000 instead of $1,500,000, and with guaranties of continuation of the social exclusiveness of the parterre boxes and of the present boxholders' exclusive rights to them. And this transaction—in which the public is to pay almost $2,000,000 to perpetuate the boxholders' satisfactions and privileges and its own discomforts and humiliations—is presented as a civic-minded action to save the opera's home. Not only presented but accepted. The transaction is one of those smoothly brazen infamies that call for a little of the anger and indignation which rise up in Mr. Downes and spill out on paper when a conductor does away with noisy applause between movements of a symphony. But it has elicited from him only approval last summer and silence ever since—unless it was he who wrote the recent *Times* editorial. The *Times's* approval is that of a conservative newspaper—a newspaper, that is, which believes literally in conserving whatever exists and functions and has money invested in it or buildings erected around it or important people associated with it, and which therefore believes that nothing or as little as possible should be said about the evils connected with it, whether these are a Teapot Dome lease or an unloading of a Metropolitan Opera House on the public. And Mr. Downes, in this matter, has been the perfect critic for a conservative newspaper, but not for the public.

Two books on the musical scene are at hand. Virgil Thomson's "The State of Music" (Morrow, $2.75) I recommend to a reader who has, to start with, a grasp of the facts about the musical world that will enable him to know when Thomson's acute, ironic, witty, eccentric mind offers a keenly and amusingly perceptive comment on the facts, and when, on the other hand, the writing is to be taken as a mere exercise of an acute, ironic, witty, eccentric mind, and as such enjoyable or fantastic or unintelligible. Howard Taubman's "Music as a Profession" (Scribners, $2.50) is for the reader who does not know. It is written with the caution and discretion of an assistant critic on a conservative newspaper, one whose usefulness as a news gatherer depends on his maintaining friendly relations with the people who control musical activities, and one who cannot risk libel suits. A sordid detail is, then, omitted here, understated there, covered up with one of the too many anecdotes elsewhere. And there are statements—for example, about teachers and how to choose one—which have no connection with realities. Nevertheless, Taubman's picture of the organization of musical activity is sufficiently detailed and candidly informative to be as depressing to the interested onlooker as it must be to the interested musician.

Only a few records have arrived from Victor, among them Dorothy Maynor's first—a coupling of Schubert's "Ave Maria" and "Gretchen am Spinnrade" (15752, $2). As at her recital, her voice and phrasing are exquisite in the first song and less impressive in the second. Two other excellent vocal records are Marian Anderson's of "Deep River," "Dere's No Hidin' Place," and "Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit" (2032, $1.50), and Elisabeth Schumann's of Schubert's "Des Baches Wiegenlied," strangely coupled with Bohm's "Still wie die Nacht" (15735, $2); and Caruso's voice, rerecorded with present-day orchestral accompaniment, is magnificent in some trashy music from "Cavalleria Rusticana" and Gounod's "Reine de Saba" (15732, $2).

The four Bach Chorale-Preludes—"Wachet auf!" "In Dulci Jublio," "Nun freut euch, lieben Christen," and the wonderful "Nun komm', der Heiden Heiland"—on one record of E. Power Briggs's set (M-616, $4.50) are recorded with fidelity to organ timbre, but the chorales cannot always be distinguished in the texture. This is true, for example, in "Nun komm', der Heiden Heiland"; and here the businesslike Mr. Biggs's pace is too brisk for the profound emotion of the work to be realized. The two Daquin Noëls on the second record of the set are charming. A fine record of old music is the one of Sigismont d'India's "Lagrimo occhi miei" and three pieces by Monteverdi sung by Maria Castellazzi and Leila Ben Sedira (15466, $2); impressive, also, is Palestrina's "O bone Jesu," well sung by the University of Pennsylvania Choral Society, but not Casciolini's "Quaerite primum" on the reverse side (15732, $2); and Rameau's "La Pantomime," "L'Indiscrète," and "La Rameau," played by Ars Rediviva, are charming (12490, $1.50). But the Johann Christian Bach Concerto Opus 7, No. 6, excellently recorded by Mme Roesgen-Champion and a group of strings (444½, $2), and the Vivaldi Sonata in D minor, excellently recorded by Ars Rediviva (12491, $1.50), I find uninteresting.

B. H. HAGGIN

In Early Issues of The Nation
John Dos Passos, second of a series of articles
BY MARGARET MARSHALL
"The Study of History," by Arnold J. Toynbee
REVIEWED BY HANS KOHN

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FILMS

AS YOU may have heard, "Gone with the Wind," the $3,900,000 super-picture in technicolor—playing time: three hours and thirty-seven minutes—has arrived. During years of preparation and twelve months of actual shooting, hundreds of people under David O. Selznick's supervision were at work to produce the epoch-making picture of our time. The result is a film which is a major event in the history of the industry but only a minor achievement in motion-picture art. There are moments when the two categories meet on good terms, but the long stretches between are filled with mere spectacular efficiency. One admires an excellent cast and a hundred technical details, but one's heart seldom beats faster. While one waits to be carried away, critical thoughts have time to develop. The feeling grows that one is sitting in a Hollywood Duesenberg with nowhere to go.

The picture consists of two parts punctuated by a brief intermission. The first starts with the Civil War and ends with its close; Scarlett O'Hara is back in Tara. The second is essentially the story of her marriage with Rhett Butler. In the first part the Civil War is the driving force, not the characters. In the second the characters dominate. The hospital scenes and the evacuation and burning of Atlanta are dramas in themselves, and their cinematographic reproduction is unforgettable; at the same time they reveal the principal weakness of the picture as a whole: the characters alone do not suffice. This would be no fault if not they but the times were the focus. As it is, a Strindbergian theme is attacked without Strindberg's power, hate, and insight. In spite of many excellent scenes the drama is not convincing. With the camera turning from high spot to high spot the psychological development is neglected. One understands less and less why things happen and thinks easily of more plausible alternatives. This also explains why in the end Rhett Butler's "I don't give a damn" comes as a surprise and shock to the audience.

These are critical remarks dictated by absolute standards. Relatively the picture represents progress in many respects. The courage of its producer deserves sincere acknowledgment. He proves that films of more than three hours' playing time are possible, opening the way to movie epics. He sets a new technical standard: the era of the sixties is reproduced in architecture, costumes, and make-up as never before. The technicolor photography is so superb that the normal preference for black-and-white pictures is forgotten. And the cast, in the main scenes as in the episodes, is excellent.

Vivien Leigh in appearance and movements is perfect as Scarlett. Her acting is best when she is allowed to accentuate the contrasts of the split personality she portrays. Why she loves Ashley Wilkes (Leslie Howard, who is convincing in his specialty as noble sap) remains a riddle, but that is not the actress's fault. She is particularly effective in such moments of characterization as on the morning after Rhett has carried her up to her room against her will. Clark Gable as Rhett Butler is best in the second part, where he can show the heart of the tough guy though he cannot bridge the gap between his love and his final disgust—but again, it is not his fault. Of the other characters I have only space to mention Hattie McDaniel as Mammy and Butterfly McQueen as Prissy. Victor Fleming's direction is expert and always tasteful with one exception: when he lets Scarlett stand like the Statue of Liberty on the barren fields of Tara after she has vomited (a scene which is hidden in shadows).

Of course one can easily conceive of a less polished and more exciting production of "Gone with the Wind"—for example, as an independent Eric von Stroheim would have done it. On the other hand, the fact that the hero and heroine of a super-picture are no longer merely noble and glamorous indicates a development which deserves high praise.

"The Light That Failed" (Paramount) is an ambitious movie version of Kipling's famous story. It is unevenly told, but Ida Lupino, as the girl who destroys her own portrait, makes the picture worth seeing.

FRANZ HOELLERING

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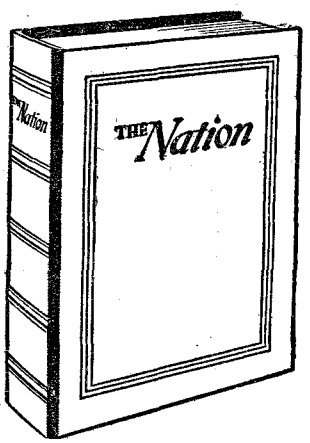

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